

REMARKS

This amendment is responsive to the Office Action that issued January 17, 2001. In light of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and removal of the grounds for rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-18 are pending in this Patent Application. Claims 1, 7, and 12 are independent claims.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,049,823 to Hwang ("Hwang").

Hwang shows an interactive television system that can provide video-on-demand services, shopping, and games on a "private viewing channel" as well as on a "group viewing channel" (see, Col. 1, lines 58-61). In this way, a user may interact with a number of group-based games and services. For the purposes of increasing effective bandwidth, channel-processors (1) are mutually accessible (see, Col. 5, lines 7-10) and communicate in a peer-to-peer workgroup (see, Col. 5, lines 34-38).

Apparently, Claim 1, as submitted has been interpreted to cover a group-based gaming platform. It is not the Applicants intention to cover as broad an area as that. The Applicants do not intend this Claim to read on one user requesting whether another user wishes to play a game with them and the other

person then responding (see, the Office Action Page 4, paragraph 3, lines 13-15) although it is not at all clear that Hwang in fact supports even that operation.

As discussed previously, Hwang describes in effect, two types of content viewing. Group-viewing includes programming introductory information, games, group discussions, and shopping. Private-viewing includes movie on-demand, video games, shopping, hotel information and services, and remote office applications (see, Col. 13, lines 35-48).

What Hwang is in fact describing is a system for providing multimedia with a hotel-type establishment wherein movies and video games are provided to each of the hotel rooms (e.g., see, FIG. 3a, and the accompanying description starting on Col. 13, line 54 and continuing thereafter).

A "group game" feature provides a "county fair environment for example in the form of a horse race with the guests being participants in the race. Th guests act as jockeys and receive information such as when one horse trips another, both are disabled for 3 seconds (see, Col. 16, lines 53-57).

This is not an environment wherein query information is automatically shared amongst the televisions of the various patrons of the hotel nor is this use suggested. In fact, in each of the applications, users are sending requests, such as gaming commands (see, Col. 16, lines 53-56), fast forward (video

on-demand), transaction information, or specific data is sent or received, such as chat-room information, or confirmation information for a purchase.

To facilitate setup and maintenance of the system, Hwang shows that the channel-processor may query the iTVpanel for "current state information" (see, Col. 14, line 30, though Col. 15, line 15). In Hwang, it is the iTVpanel that connects to a television. In fact, the only query information that the iTVpanel provides is directly from the iTVpanel to the channel-processor. It is proper that each Applicant may be "their own lexicographer" in defining (and interpreting for that matter) terms utilized within a given patent or patent application. Hwang's state information pertains to acting states of the iTVpanel. Hwang in fact discloses three possible states for the iTVpanel including ready (see, Col. 14, lines 37-39), session (see, Col. 14, lines 40-43), and initial (see, Col. 14, lines 51-54). This information is in fact the only information that would be required for maintenance and service of the described network including video on-demand bandwidth and content.

Arguably, this information may also be communicated to an iTVserver, but in no instances, is it disclosed, suggested, or even reasonable to expect that this information is provided to another hotel guest through another respective iTVpanel.

Hwang further describes that a user may enter a "group

viewing channel" and in the event that no space is available, they may become a wait-in-line viewer who later may be promoted to a participant (see, Col. 10, lines 7-13).

The claims of the present patent application can not reasonably be interpreted to be so broad.

Specifically, Hwang does not disclose or suggest (emphasis provided) "[a] television comprising ... a processor configured to automatically provide query information to the other television and configured to automatically provide queried information in response to a query request from the other television" as required by Claim 1. Hwang in fact only contemplates the iTVpanel sharing information with a channel-processor as discussed above.

In terms of the present invention, a "query request" is a request for "information identifying content currently watched on the queried television ..." (see, the patent application, page 4, lines 11-14). Hwang does not disclose or suggest this sharing amongst televisions or even this type of information to be shared. Accordingly, Claim 1 is patentable over Hwang and an indication to that effect is respectfully requested. Claims 7 and 12 are respectively, a system and method requiring similar elements as Claim 1 and are therefore also allowable and an indication to that effect is respectfully requested.

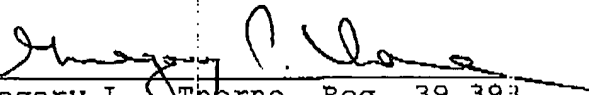
In addition, Claims 2-6, 8-11, and 13-18 respectively depend from one of Claims 1, 7, and 12 and therefore are also patentable for at least this reason as well as for the individual elements found in each of the claims. For example, Hwang does not disclose or suggest "query compliance status information" as defined by the patent application. This definition utilized in the patent application may not be ignored to make it read on Hwang's acknowledgements between an iTVserver and channel-processor (see, Col. 17, lines 35-43). It should be noted that this is not a term of art and accordingly should be interpreted to be in accordance with the terms usage within the present patent application.

In the present application, the "query compliance status" is a determination of whether a queried television is setup to share content identifying information with a given querying television (see, patent application page 8, lines 12-15). Applicant is free to utilize and define terms in the application and these definitions should not be ignored when viewing the prior art. However, even in that stretch, Hwang could not be said to anticipate under 35 U.S.C. §102 these claims elements as required by at least Claims 3-5, 8-10, 14, and 16-18. Nor does Hwang disclose or suggest each television receiving information identifying each other television of a plurality of televisions as essentially required by Claims 13 and 14. For all of the

above, Claims 2-6, 8-11, and 13-18 and 18 are also patentable over Hwang. Accordingly, allowance of Claims 2-6, 8-11 and 13-18 is also respectfully requested.

A sincere effort has been made to place the application in suitable condition for allowance and notice to that effect is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX

1. (Amended) A television comprising:

a connection configured to be operatively coupled to a connection of an other television; and

a processor configured to automatically provide query information to the other television and configured to automatically provide queried information in response to a query request from the other television.

7. (Amended) A communication system comprising a plurality of televisions interconnected together, wherein said televisions are configured to automatically provide query information to others of said plurality of televisions and are configured to automatically provide queried information in response to a query request from said others of said plurality of televisions.

12. (Amended) A method of providing communications between a plurality of televisions, said method comprising:

a. sending a query request from any of said plurality of televisions to any other of said plurality of televisions, and

b. sending queried information from said any other of said plurality of televisions to said any of said plurality of televisions that sent the query request automatically in response to said query request.